

# Rare Plants of Louisiana



## *Thalassia testudinum* - turtle-grass Tape-grass Family (Hydrocharitaceae)

**Rarity Rank:** S2?/G4G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure

**Range:** FL, LA, MS, TX; Bermuda and West Indies, south to northern South America

### **Recognition:**

- Submerged, meadow-forming marine aquatic plant with linear ribbon-like leaves
- Thick, horizontal, scaly rhizomes bearing spaced clusters of leafy vertical shoots (fibrous remains of old leaves usually present)
- Leaves broadly linear, to 35 cm long by 1 cm wide, minutely toothed at the rounded apices
- Flowers born in sheaths near the base of the shoots; male and female flowers born on separate plants (= dioecious)
- Fruit is rounded, densely warty, about 2 cm long, opening by valves and appearing like an earth-star

**Flowering Time:** June, fruiting July-October

### **Wetland Indicator Status:**

OBL – almost always in wetlands

### **Habitat:**

Clear shallow saline waters with depths of 0.6 to 1.5 m; salinities range from 20 to over 35 ppt.

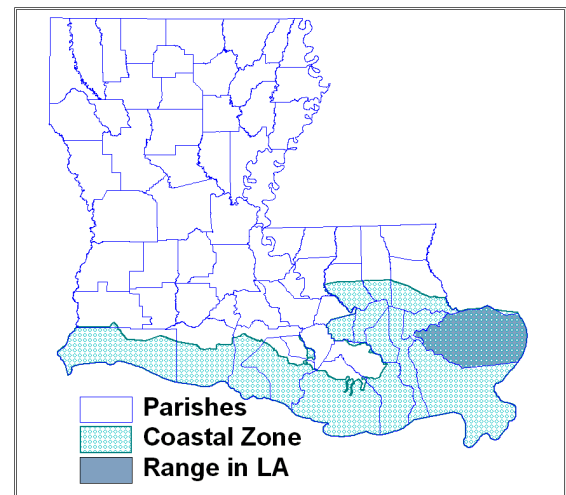
### **Threats:**

- Dredging for channel or pipeline construction
- Any activities that increase turbidity and sediment load
- Spoil deposition on sea grass beds
- Contamination by chemicals

### **Beneficial Management Practices:**

- Protect sea grass beds from mechanical and water quality impacts
- Avoid activities in shallow waters that might increase disturbance and turbidity

**LA River Basins:** Pontchartrain





Fruiting material of *Thalassia testudinum*.

R.A. Howard @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution.

## References:

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